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## FORTUNATE FATE.

BY GEORGE JOHNSON.

A languor o'er the landscape lies,  
A change has crossed the earth and skies,  
Solemn, but glorious;  
With heaven looking in his eyes,  
The exhausted year falls back and dies,  
But dies victorious.

With all his golden harvest in,  
And nothing left for him to win,  
Just as he halted  
To view his work and hear the din  
Of grateful tongues, the year has been  
By Death assailed.

And it is well; and many more,  
Grown great in any work or war,  
Would leave to cherish  
A purer name, a surer name,  
If in the hour that makes their fame  
They could but perish.

## THE SEA OF FIRE; OR, ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

PROEM.

THE DE LANCY.

The De Lancy family was old. The first American De Lancy had come over with Lord Baltimore. The De Lancys had prospered and grown rich from year to year. They had acquired large estates both in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and above all they had owned the famous De Lancy Ruby.

The Pennsylvania and Maryland estates and the great Ruby had descended from father to son, until, in the present century, they had fallen to the lot of Ralph and Calvert De Lancy. Ralph, the elder, had taken the Maryland property and the Ruby, while the land in Pennsylvania became Calvert's share.

Calvert apparently was strict, self-contained, self-controlled, marking out a path for himself, and rigidly adhering to it. He entered the army, and earned a reputation for bravery and fondness for discipline. He had risen to the rank of brigadier-general.

Ralph had adopted no profession. He had early married a young and beautiful wife. She was in delicate health. They were sojourning in Italy, when she died in giving birth to a son—Aubrey. After his wife's death, Ralph plunged into dissipation. As soon as he was old enough, the child, Aubrey, was sent home. His father remained in Europe—living principally in Paris, in which city he lost large sums at play. Finally, the great Ruby disappeared. It had been set in a ring, but its place was now occupied by a large pearl. One night Ralph De Lancy played for high stakes in a Paris salon. The next morning he awoke, owning nothing but his wife's ring which he wore on his finger.

In the meantime Aubrey De Lancy had grown from childhood to youth, and the first year of manhood was opening to him when he received a letter from his father—the first in twenty-one years. Ralph De Lancy had wandered from place to place, and at last settled down as a banker in a Brazilian city.

Aubrey had spent his life thus far in a stately old mansion, in one of the richest and most picturesque counties of Pennsylvania. His Uncle Calvert was seldom at home, but though he showed no love for the boy, he took care that he was properly cared for and educated. In return, Aubrey made himself useful in various ways, for his uncle was anything but a man of business. Of late, Aubrey had received some money from his father. These he had invariably placed in back to him, and on a certain October evening he told with his lips what his eyes had told her before.

## CHAPTER I.

FAMILY AND FOREBODING NOTES.

The smooth expanse of well-kept lawn stretched down to the brink of the clear-flowing river. Clumps of shrubbery and huge circular beds of scarlet geraniums, glowing like rubies amid the emerald setting of the lawn, stood between the river and the house. The house, with its back-ground of autumn-brown trees, was a pretty object to contemplate, although it was of the modern American style of architecture, having Greek pillars, Gothic turrets, a Mansard roof, and stucco ornaments in profusion. The morning was one of those breeding, fresh October mornings that come with an overflying wealth of bright sunshine and azure sky, as if to show us that if Mother Earth gains in years, she loses nothing in beauty.

In a small room, the French window of which looked on the lawn, Mildred Verne was seated. A light ead stood before her, holding an unfinished sketch of a group of forget-me-nots and pansies. But Mildred Verne was not painting. Her brush hung idly in her right hand, while her cheek rested on the other. She looked troubled and anxious. Ever and anon she turned with ill-concealed impatience toward the door. Her cheeks were flushed, and her large, dark, earnest eyes seemed full of some sad thought. She was really beautiful this morning.

Want of color, connoisseurs said, was the fault of her face, and the rose-tint that suffused it now, remedied its only defect. She was a slender, graceful girl—a brunette—with a skin as smooth and pale as the petals of a magnolia, and an abundance of exquisitely fine dark hair that was neither black nor brown. Her dress was of some soft buff and white-colored stuff, and in spite of the fashionable and ugly ruffles, puffs, and excrecences, it looked as graceful on her as the drapery of one of Canova's statues.

A rustling—the loud frum-frum of a stiff silk dress—was heard in the hall. Mildred seized her palette, and began to use her brush vigorously upon her group of flowers. "Good-morning, my dear," said a snare, low-toned voice, and a lady, well-preserved, but evidently past the prime of life, entered. She was a pretty, brown-eyed, brown-haired woman, with something more than the suspicion of a double chin. Her features were small, and expressed entire satisfaction with herself and all the world. But only half of this expression told the truth. She was remarkably well-satisfied with herself, but not with all the world, and she had thought of several plans for improving it, or at least that portion of it which lay immediately around her. Her name was Mrs. Martyn Verne, and she was Mildred's stepmother.

"Very pretty, very pretty, indeed," said Mrs. Martyn Verne in her smooth voice that irresistibly reminded one of drooping oil, as she raised her eyelids, and looked over Mildred's shoulder. "I hope you enjoyed your breakfast, my dear. I was sorry to leave you alone, but this morning my health made it absolutely necessary for me to take my chocolate in bed."

Mildred nervously clenched the handle of her brush. "Cruel, cruel," she thought. "to talk in this way of trifles when she knows that I am waiting to hear her answer to Aubrey."

"Such a charming day!" And Mrs. Verne allowed herself to drop gently into the softest chair. "I don't believe the far-famed Italian sky is equal to our heavenly blue." Mrs. Verne looked placidly out the window, and arranged the ochre-tinted Valenciennes lace at her throat. "Dear me, how I should like to travel! Your dear papa was a great traveller. He brought me this lace and my pearl brooch from Rome. He was told that they had been heirlooms in the Cenci family, but I am not sure—"

Mildred could endure the suspense no longer. She had proudly resolved not to speak first of the subject nearest her heart, but her pride gave way before her anxiety to know the truth. "Mamma," she interrupted, "what did Aubrey say last night?"

"Aubrey?" said Mrs. Verne, in a tone of gentle rebuke. "Mr. De Lancy, you mean. For my sake, my dear, don't show so much emotion. It's extremely unladylike. In society people never show what they feel or say what they think. I am trying to school you, Mildred, into that apparent indifference which is a mark of good-breeding."

"Speak, mamma, tell me! Did he say—"

"Mildred faltered, and her color brightened. Mrs. Verne shook her head sadly.

"You will be impulsive, Mildred! I must confess I was greatly surprised to night when young Mr. De Lancy said to me in private. I may say, with truth, that I was never so much astonished, saying life as when he asked me for Aubrey to that you awaited only my perusal to become his wife. I could not believe it. Here the evidence of my ear, my eye, and Aubrey De Lancy has played and

quarrelled with each other ever since you could speak. The idea is too absurd!"

"And why?" demanded Mildred, with some resentment in her voice.

"How can you ask such a question, my dear? Have you no knowledge of human nature? People who have known each other intimately never marry—at least, my experience proves it—for they are too well acquainted with each other's faults. When a man marries a woman, my dear, he generally believes her to be an angel. If it were not for that belief there would be no love-matches. Now, how can Aubrey De Lancy think you an angel when you have scratched and pinched him scores of times?"

"Aubrey likes me because I am myself!" exclaimed Mildred, indignantly.

"Moderate your tones, I implore. Well, young Mr. De Lancy begged and entreated that I would not refuse my permission. It was really a picturesque scene. The library all darkened, with a mere thread of moonlight coming through the window, and the young man protesting and entreating. I enjoyed it. It was like an incident in a play."

"Oh, mamma, what answer did you give him?" Mildred started to her feet, almost certain of what the answer had been, and yet faintly hoping still.

"I said no, Mildred, but it was for your good. Aubrey De Lancy is poor, and we are not rich. I spend over half of my income, and our style of living is very inferior to what I was accustomed to before your father's death. When you marry, Mildred, it must be for money. Poor girls can't afford to fall in love."

"I will never marry for money!" cried Mildred, her eyes blazing with scorn. "If I cannot marry Aubrey, I never marry anybody—there!" and she burst into a passion of tears.

"Extremely undignified—very unladylike," said Mrs. Martyn Verne, addressing herself to the ceiling. "But I have not finished yet, my dear. Mr. Aubrey De Lancy last night ended the part of a despairing lover to perfection. But I was, as usual, cool and collected. At last I made him understand that two people cannot live on nothing. He has expectations, no doubt. When his Uncle Calvert dies, he will probably inherit the De Lancy estate; but then he must marry, and have children; and people can't subsist on expectation that may come to nothing. After much reasoning on my part, he seemed to see the wisdom of my position. He engaged in some business down in an outlandish South-American place. He thinks—Aubrey's father—that he can gain a fortune there much more quickly than at home; and he intends to leave us in a few days."

"Without seeing me?"

"No, my dear. It was imprudent, I admit, but I have a heart, and I gave him permission to call here, and take his leave. If he makes a fair amount of money, and you both remain attached to each other until his return from South America, you may become man and wife with my full consent."

Mildred did not seem to feel sufficiently grateful for this condescending permission. She had caught sight of some object in the grounds. She waved her hand, and then ran lightly out through the French window. Aubrey De Lancy had just emerged from the shrubbery that bordered the road.

Mrs. Martyn Verne clasped her hands in despair. "Will the girl ever learn that composure and calmness should be a lady's chief characteristics? How affectionate they are! One would think they had not met for years. Well, let them vow and promise. They are both young, and youth forgets easily."

With this sentiment on her lips, Mrs. Martyn Verne left the room.

The lovers had met on the lawn. "Oh, Aubrey!" Mildred began, in a choking voice, as the young man drew her arm within his.

"Oh, Mildred!" said Aubrey, trying to smile. But the attempt was a failure. "Cheer up, Mildred. It will be only for a little while."

"But you will be far, far away, for all that. Every hour of your absence will seem a year to me. Oh, why must you go?"

"I must go, Mildred, because I want you to be my wife. If I stay here that can never be. Your stepmother's words last night opened my eyes to my own selfishness. Here have I been carelessly lounging about my uncle's place, doing nothing."

"That is untrue," interrupted Mildred, warmly. "I have heard your uncle himself say that the estate would have gone to ruin long ago, if you had not been there."

"But, Mildred, did that place me nearer to the end, for which I intend to work henceforth with all my strength? Did it bring me the permission that I might call you wife? No. It did not. All that does not put me nearer to you, I account as nothing."

"Why should you go away, Aubrey? Can you not make money at home?—or why not wait? You will be your uncle's heir."

"Your stepmother has been telling you so; but she has forgotten my father; and even if I were his heir, I would never stoop to wait in idleness for a dead man's shoes."

"For me, for suggesting it, but the thought that we must part is terrible. Where are you going? My stepmother said to some place in South America."

"To Paris, in Brazil."

Mildred sighed. "I will try to live and hope. It will be very hard."

"And you will not forget me?" he said, looking wistfully into her face. "You will not forget me?"

"How can you ask? That would be impossible."

"Promise. Let me hear you say it."

"I will be true to you until death, Aubrey," she said, solemnly.

"And I to you, Mildred. Nothing on earth can part us."

They stood on the lawn. Everything around them was fair and joyful—in mockery it seemed. The two passed up to the house in silence. They entered Mildred's boudoir. Aubrey looked around sadly. Each object in the room reminded him of bright days that were past—perhaps forever. He took the little sketch of pansies and forget-me-nots from the easel. "Thought and remembrance," he said, gazing at the unfinished flowers. "May I keep this?"

Mildred assented silently. He drew from his vest-pocket a gold ring in which was set a large pearl, and placed it on Mildred's finger.

"Wear it until you exchange it for the one that will bind you to me for life. This ring was my mother's. Once it held the great Ruby; and when the Ruby left us our good fortune went with it."

Mildred looked at the ring, and noticed that the space around the pearl had been

filled up with gold, as if the original stone had been much larger. Her eyes filled with tears. He deemed her worthy to wear the ring of that mother whose very name was to him a holy thing! She thanked him with a look.

A few more words, very low and sad, yet being their last, also very sweet, and they parted. A cloud crossed the face of the sun, and shadowed lawn, river, and road, as Aubrey gazed for the last time upon them. And at the same time the first shadow of a darker cloud fell on the lives of the two who had lately said farewell.

"Mr. De Lancy has gone, ma'am," announced Mrs. Martyn Verne's maid.

"Gone?" repeated that lady, languidly looking up from a novel. "I am glad to hear it, Nora. In six months we'll make Mildred a rich woman, and I'll enjoy the luxuries to which I have been accustomed."

"Trot, ma'am, she mayn't give up her swateheart so easily."

"Pshaw, Nora! She'll forget him in three months."

"Miss Mildred isn't the girl to forget," said Nora, indignantly.

"Can't you comb my hair without putting it out by the roots? She will not forget, you say. We shall see." And Mrs. Verne returned to her novel.

## CHAPTER II.

ANTONIO THE AVENGER.

At nightfall an old man was often seen stealing stealthily through the streets of Para toward his home in the most obscure quarter of the city. Few noticed him save those of his own race whom he casually met. By them he was treated with deep respect. He was an Indian. His name was Antonio, to which name the Indians had added, in their own language, the significant title of avenger. In the terrible revolution of 1835, he had proved his claim to this appellation. When the government had regained power in Para he was imprisoned, but soon released through the influence of some friend at court. Since that time he had lived alone in Para.

Antonio the Avenger spent the greater part of his time in the surrounding forest, and poor as the old Indian seemed, he possessed a jewel of inestimable value—a jewel which had been the envy of barbaric princes—to obtain which Indian kings long before the coming of Pizarro or Cortez had given hundreds of slaves and a thousand times its weight in gold. The Indians, in their blind idolatry, had named it "The Sea of Fire," and it certainly looked as if the crimson glow of a burning forest had been concentrated within it. This ruby had been handed down from chief to chief of Antonio's tribe for many centuries. For the last two hundred years it had been alienated from the tribe. A white adventurer had gained possession of it, and among his countrymen it was known as the great De Lancy Ruby. This white adventurer was one of Aubrey De Lancy's ancestors. At last Antonio had regained the stone—the tradition of which remained among his people. There was in Para one man who knew that Antonio possessed the gem. This man was Rosa Barleigh. He had silently followed Antonio into the forest, and there he had seen the old Indian gazing over his hidden treasure. Rosa Barleigh resolved that the stone should be his. Day after day this man tracked the unconscious old Indian from place to place with the unerring tenacity of a bloodhound. His opportunity came at last.

The oppressive stillness of a southern night brooded over the depth of the forest. No sound save the far-distant cry of some

wild animal, or the fall of a heavy bough broke the profound silence. Where the trees grew less dense, the light of the moon struggled down on feathery, fern-like palms and twining, anaky lianas.

Aubrey De Lancy had wandered far into the woods, following the track of a jaguar. He had lost the animal's trail and his own way, and night had overtaken him unaware. He was now endeavoring to recover the path that led toward Para. These far he had been unsuccessful. During the two years that had passed since he had come to Brazil, he spared no exertion to make himself familiar with the forest and its inhabitants; but it takes a lifetime to thoroughly know even a small portion of a South American forest, and where a native would have been perfectly at home, Aubrey was wholly bewildered.

He had walked slowly, carefully seeking for some sign that might indicate the locality. Not using night as his guide, for that was comparatively useless now, but the sense of feeling—which in a woodman's life is educated to the highest degree.

Suddenly he stopped and looked steadily ahead of him. At this place a tall palm had fallen, dragging with it numerous smaller trees and a mass of creeping vines. Here, at least, the unobstructed moonbeams made the scene nearly as light as day.

Half-hidden in the foliage of the fallen trees, lay a sleeping man. It was Antonio the Avenger. Bending over him, stood Rosa Barleigh. The latter held poised over the old Indian's heart, a broad, sharp knife, or machete. The glitter of the steel in the pale light caught Aubrey De Lancy's eye. With the swiftness of thought, Aubrey raised his rifle to his shoulder, forgetting that a short time before he had had his last shot at a jaguar. He pulled the trigger. A sharp click followed.

moving a limb. Though the shadow of a towering palm hid him from view.

Aubrey thought of the revolver in his pocket. In another instant the upraised machete would pierce the palpitating flesh of the helpless victim. The old Indian had awakened, and unable to utter a sound, was gazing in impotent agony into the cruel face above him.

"Hold!" cried Aubrey. "Hold, or I fire!"

The murderer was intent on his work. The knife was descending. A lurid flash, a loud report, a shriek from Antonio, a groan from Barleigh, and a wild chorus of cries from the aroused animals of the forest.

Rosa Barleigh fell forward, with the machete pointed downward upon the body of the prostrate Indian.

Uttering an exclamation of dismay, Aubrey sprang from beneath the shadow of the palm. The ball from the pistol had entered Barleigh's right side. He showed no sign of life when Aubrey reached him. A groan from the old Indian told that he still lived. Aubrey dragged Barleigh from Antonio's body, and as he did so the machete was drawn from the wound in the Indian's breast. A gush of blood followed, for Barleigh had fallen a dead weight upon the weapon.

Aubrey tore off his linen coat, and with it endeavored to staunch the crimson tide.

"It is useless," said Antonio, in a scarcely audible voice. "It is useless, Aubrey, I must die. It has been so for me. The blade of that machete was dipped in the 'Sea of Fire.' I know its effects too well."

Aubrey felt that there was but little hope, if that deadly and quick-working poison had been used. He remembered the antidote.

"It may not be too late to save you. Is there salt in your pouch?"

The Indian shook his head negatively.

Aubrey looked at the hideous, gaping wound, and shuddered. He could not stand there idly, and see the life of a fellow being ebbing away. He had heard it said by the Indians that this poison is harmless if swallowed, provided there is no open scratch or wound that the poison can touch. Crushing down his overwhelming disgust with the firmness of his resolution, he knelt beside the Indian. The latter divined his intention.

"No," he said, proudly waving Aubrey away with a gesture of his right hand. "No. A descendant of Atahualpa cannot owe his life to one of the conqueror's race."

A fierce red flash shot into the old man's eyes. He pointed toward Rosa Barleigh. "You killed him?"

Aubrey assented.

"You did well. You avenged me. His blood flows from his heart, and the earth drinks it. It is well." An expression of peaceful malice and satisfaction overspread the Indian's face, making him for a moment unconscious of the pain throbs of his wound. "You have avenged me, pale face—you have avenged me, and I will reward you. Here at my side you will find a pouch. That is it, take it."

After some fumbling, Aubrey succeeded in detaching a skin pouch from Antonio's belt. The Indian held out his trembling hand for it. He opened the pouch, and from it took the Ruby wrapped in many folds of silky palm leaves. He muttered some inarticulate words over the stone, and returned it to Aubrey.

"It is yours," he said, feebly. "I am dying. The last chief of my tribe is dying. To you I give the Sea of Fire—the treasure of our race. Know you that an Inca once loved to feast his eyes upon it? Perhaps he saw therein the blood of his enemies. I



loved it for that reason, but the blood I have shed would fill a sea, larger, wider, deeper."

Aubrey started back in horror. The old chief's face had become ghastly from loss of blood. The falling moonlight revealed it distorted by pain, rage and savage emotion. He had slightly raised himself to his knees, but he now fell back speechless. Aubrey looked around for water. There was none at hand. Antonio spoke again in a thick, guttural voice.

"Guard this treasure well, man of the North. To my vengeance I can deny nothing. You are now the guardian of the Son of Fire. Keep it well. Never let it leave you, or ruin and death will surely fall upon you. It left our tribe once. Since then we have been doomed."

The old man's voice subsided into a faint moan. A cloud hid the moon; the shadows of death and night seemed both to swoop down at once. Darkness and silence took possession of the forest.

Aubrey marked the spot by cutting strips of bark from the neighboring trees. Then he resumed his search for the path. He had just left the place where the two men lay when an Indian, his arms filled with evil-smelling herbs, emerged from a tangled clump of trees, and began groping on the ground as if searching for a particular plant. Accidentally she struck her hand against Rosa Burleigh's head. By means of flint, steel and dry palm-fibers she struck a light, and looked into his face.

"Bah!" she grunted, contemptuously. "Satanas, thy patron, has thee now." She turned toward Antonio the Avenger. Her wrinkled face expressed deep interest. With almost reverential care she raised his head. She started off, soon returning with a gourd filled with salt—the antidote to the Uru's poison. This she forced into Antonio's mouth, murmuring and chanting as she did so.

At last Aubrey De Lancy found the path that led back to the city. He walked during the remainder of the night. When he reached Para the rays of dawn had veiled the cloud curtains of night, and torn them aside. Standing in the flowing flood of morning light he took Antonio's gift from the pouch. The gem was as valuable in size and color. He examined it minutely. There was a crest faintly cut on the under side. The truth flashed into his mind.

The Sea of Fire was the great De Lancy Ruby, and he had regained it!

The bodies of Rosa Burleigh and Antonio the Avenger were not found. Aubrey sent several servants into the forest with orders to bury them. The servants discovered the spots marked by Aubrey, but no trace of death remained.

#### CHAPTER III.

Two years before when Aubrey De Lancy had landed at Para, his father had greeted him for the first time since his infancy. The meeting between the father and son was to outward eyes not very affectionate. They had simply looked into each other's faces, and shaken hands. Had they been French or Spanish, and not American, the spectators would have been favored with an affecting scene.

Ralph De Lancy was not yet fifty, but in appearance he was at least seventy. Disposition and remorse for the misdeeds of his early life had made him prematurely old. His form was bent and his hair white, but he still retained in his countenance some traces of the manly beauty for which he had been noted in his youth. Aubrey now, as what he had once been. They both possessed the broad, smooth brow, the aquiline nose, and, in the father some what dimmed, the dark blue eyes of their family. But here the likeness between them ended. Aubrey's countenance expressed resolution and firmness, yet withal, manly gentleness, while his father's was painfully weak and uncertain in expression. Some great dread seemed to be constantly hanging over him.

After their first meeting, they had fallen into the position most in accordance with their respective characters. Aubrey had taken the lead in everything. His father leaned upon him with a sense of protection and confidence in his superior strength.

Ralph De Lancy's banking business was not in a very prosperous condition. After wandering aimlessly in many lands, he had seized the opportunity of entering this business in the hope of retrieving the fortune which through his own baseness he had lost. He was far from that end at present. It was now that Aubrey founded the business training and experience he had acquired in managing his uncle's estate. He went bravely to work on his arrival at Para, and, although the business, even at its best, was not likely to prove a mine of wealth, he succeeded in reducing its details into something like order, much to Ralph De Lancy's relief, whom it had involved in a chaos of perplexity.

Aubrey De Lancy was not naturally superstitious, but the last words of old Antonio, predicting ruin and death to him, if the Ruby should leave him, rung in his ears, and he could not shake off their influence. Perhaps, too, his residence among the half-civilized Indians, who firmly believe in the powers of charms and talismans, had, unknown to himself, infected his mind. However that might be, since he had received the wonderful stone, it had never left his person, except for the moment that he showed it to his father.

The care-worn, scared look left Ralph De Lancy's face as he gazed on the gem.

"It is our Ruby—the great De Lancy Ruby," Aubrey said, in astonishment, and Aubrey related how he had obtained it.

A remorseful expression crossed the older man's countenance. "Ah," he murmured, "if you only knew what that stone has cost me!"

But Aubrey was thinking of something much pleasanter. "I will never part with it," he said, "until I place it, set in a wedding ring, on Mildred Verne's finger. It will then be in the De Lancy family, all the same." He had attached it to a fine steel chain, and wore it constantly next to his skin. It was in vain that his father represented the imprudence of continually carrying about him a gem of such value, and entreated him to deposit it in the safe of the bank. Aubrey listened respectfully, and that was all. The father's anger rose. "Think of the worth of the stone, at least," he said, "if you care nothing for your own life."

But Aubrey was obstinate. One morning, about a week after the terrible scene in the forest, he awoke feeling unusually heavy and oppressed. One of his first thoughts was of the Ruby. It was his custom to examine it each morning. He noticed with alarm that several links of the chain were slightly bent, but he concluded that he himself had not accidentally caused this; for the Ruby was safe, bearing with as hard a glow as ever.

It was about two o'clock, the hottest part of the day in Para. The whole population seemed to be engaged in taking siestas, for the streets were unoccupied, save by the hot, dancing sunshine. In a hammock, in

the verandah of his father's house, Aubrey reclined, half dozing, half reading, and wholly enjoying the delightful breeze that tempered the heat. In another hammock lay Ralph De Lancy, pretending to sleep, but in reality watching his son with an uneasy, troubled gaze.

Aubrey De Lancy was accounted handsome. That term, however, is too vague to define the quality that distinguished him. His figure in height was somewhat above the ordinary standard, and well proportioned; the extreme breadth of his chest and shoulders counteracted the effect of his unusual tallness, which was never noticed except when in company with other men. During his two years residence in Para, he had found plenty of opportunities to indulge in his favorite amusements of shooting and fishing, while, at the same time, he improved his knowledge of natural history. Much exposure had browned his complexion. His hair was black, and his eyes were dark blue, telling of a frank, generous nature. There was no lack of firmness in his face; he looked like a man who could hold his own in open warfare, but who, in combating underhand plotting, would be at a certain disadvantage.

He yawned, threw down his book, and looked at his watch.

"Miguel!" he suddenly called in Portuguese, addressing a person inside the house, "has the steamer arrived from Rio?"

"Yes, senhor," responded a drowsy voice.

"Any letters?"

"One, senhor." And the letter came whizzing through the air, falling into his hammock. He was too well accustomed to the laziness of Indian servants to see anything extraordinary in this rather uncourteous manner of delivering the epistle. He picked it up, and looked at the address.

"When did you receive this, Miguel?"

"Shortly before breakfast, senhor."

"Because you didn't ask me for it, Miguel," returned the drowsy voice gliding into a snore, proclaiming that Miguel had taken the shortest way of ending the discussion by dropping into the arms of Morpheus.

Aubrey examined the letter curiously. It was addressed to his father. Judging from the postmarks, it had followed a long and circuitous route before reaching its destination. He put it on a small table near the side of his father's hammock. Ralph De Lancy was wide awake in an instant.

"News from home!" he announced.

"Gooder than I expected," said Aubrey.

"Good and bad. Poor Calvert—poor fellow! Why, he was younger than I by three years. I never thought he'd go first!"

"Is my uncle dead?"

"Yes, he returned, in a low, dreamy tone. "He died in December of last year. This letter must have been nine months on its travels."

"Poor fellow!" Ralph De Lancy continued. "When I parted with him some twenty-four years ago, he was as tall and upright as a grenadier, and his muscles were like wire ropes. A fine-looking man, Aubrey; you don't see many like him now. I little thought he'd go first!"

"From whom is this letter?"

"From his lawyer."

Aubrey was disappointed. He had hoped that it might have been written by one of his father's neighbors. In that case, he would perhaps have obtained some notion of Mildred Verne. From her, he had received no letter. That little sketch of pines and forget-me-nots was the only token he had from her. He had written often. In spite of her silence, he trusted her.

"From Bronson, his lawyer," repeated Ralph De Lancy. "By his will, Calvert gives me a life interest in the estate. On my death it reverts conditionally to you. Bronson doesn't mention the condition. He might have shown more confidence in me—and he need not have feared for your inheritance, Aubrey."

But Ralph De Lancy had forgotten the past—or, at least, a portion of it—or he would not have spoken the last sentence.

"I wouldn't mind going North," said Aubrey, abruptly.

"I don't think you could. I could not wind up the affairs of the bank without your assistance. We'd better give it up—the bank, I mean. I'll go North, and you can follow me as soon as you settle affairs here."

Aubrey reflected a moment.

"Very well," he assented. "I'll stay here. I'll finish matters with all possible dispatch. I'm tired of the country, and nothing but the hope of making money could keep me in it. Now that we're little need of more money, I think we'd better get rid of the business, and go home."

"Home," said the father, half to himself. "But time hasn't taken all the sweetness out of the sound. I wouldn't take a hundred leagues of this land under the Equator—beautiful as it is—for the blackest acre of Northern ground!"

"Nor I!" responded Aubrey, warmly, but he thought of a certain acre which comprised a smooth lawn, with a graceful, girlish figure standing among the geraniums, as it had stood one autumn morning two years ago.

"The Gloria was to come up from Rio on her way to New York to-day. It was sent to Rio first."

"There's no time to be lost, then. The estate has been without an owner for nine months—quite long enough. The Gloria will not remain here more than a day. I'll use if the captain can accommodate me with a berth. Tell Miguel to pack my trunk."

"Can't you wait a week or two? The bank—"

"Oh, everything is in order there. You can easily clear off all the business in two months, at most. Leaving out the estate, Calvert's property in Philadelphia is extensive, and I must look after it. I'll be back soon. Tell Miguel to take particular care to put in the small iron box on my dressing-table."

Ralph De Lancy was about to pass into the street when Aubrey uttered a sudden exclamation. A woman had just appeared, turning the right hand corner of the verandah. She crossed the narrow street, and looked curiously at the two men as she passed.

"Do you know that woman?" he asked, starting to his feet. "Look, sir! On the other side."

The woman, aware that she was observed, turned down the nearest street. She reminds me of somebody I've known. She's governor to the Duke of Vastros's daughter, I think. A beauty, people say; but I don't admire black eyes and blonde hair in conjunction."

The receipt of that letter seemed to have raised Ralph De Lancy's spirits. He did not notice his son's agitation. Aubrey looked puzzled as he watched the woman's retreating figure. She was young, apparently, and neatly dressed in European fashion.

"That face! Where have I seen it?"

"Young hearts are doubtless very susceptible," said Ralph, with more gravity than his son had ever seen him afford, "but I scarcely thought the sight of a pretty face would throw you off your balance."

Aubrey made a gesture as if the light speech annoyed him.

"That face made me shudder involuntarily. Some terrible experience has become mixed up with it in my mind."

A father. You're morbid—

"Have it!" interrupted Aubrey. "That woman has the features of the man who killed the Indian Antonio! Those eyes so close together, I could never mistake them!"

"Well," said Ralph, "I suppose there are hundreds of people with the same type of features as that man possessed. By the by, have you the remotest idea who he was?"

"No; but I tell you that woman had his look—his peculiar expression."

"Do you believe in metempsychosis?" the older De Lancy asked, ironically.

"The soul of your murderer may have assumed another form."

Was it possible that Antonio's murderer had not been killed? Could he have assumed female attire for some evil purpose? To the latter of these questions Aubrey's common sense promptly answered, No; for the form of the woman he had just seen was the perfection of lightness and grace. No man could assume that.

Ralph De Lancy took his way toward the quay, to speak to the captain of the Gloria. Lost in thought, Aubrey paced up and down the verandah. About half an hour after his father had gone, a boy brought him a note. It ran—

"The Gloria starts in an hour. Send down my baggage. I have some business on hand now, but will meet you on the quay before she starts."

Aubrey sent down the baggage, which Miguel had packed. There was not much of it. Ralph De Lancy always travelled with as little baggage as possible. Once he had done so from necessity, now he did so from choice.

After it had gone, he suddenly thought of the iron box on his father's dressing-table. He had told Miguel, as his father had desired him, not to forget it; but it stood in its usual place.

"Miguel, why did you not put this in as I told you?"

"What, senhor?"

"The iron box."

"As I said, senhor, I told me."

"Why, then, is it?"

"I thought I had packed it in with the rest. And this was all the satisfaction Aubrey got. He slipped the small box into his coat pocket, intending to place it in his father's hands on the quay. Before starting in that direction, however, he went to the bank, which was situated in the Rua dos Mercadores. As he entered the small front office, he noticed that it was occupied by a woman. She had just presented a check to the clerk. Aubrey recognized her as the woman who had passed the verandah a short time before.

"I will take the amount in gold or in currency of the United States," she said, in a clear, feminine voice.

Her face was concealed by a dense black veil. When she had gone, Aubrey, fired by a feeling that she was in some way connected with the man he had shot, and to see the check she had presented, drew in favor of Laura Burleigh by Juan de Vastro. De Vastro was a wealthy Spanish planter, residing near Para. Aubrey scrutinized the check closely.

"We have cashed checks for this lady before, have we not?"

"She is governess in the de Vastro family," answered the voluble clerk. "A rather large salary she must get. Yes, we cashed a check to her last week, amount—"

"I remember," said Aubrey, slowly, still scrutinizing the signature. "That was all right, but this is a forgery. I don't see the check she had presented, and I don't see the woman who presented it. The woman was still in light. He started along the Rua dos Mercadores in hot pursuit.

#### CHAPTER IV.

IN THE JAGUAR'S DEN.

The tropical climate of Para is so favorable to the growth of rare vegetation, that the forest can with difficulty be prevented from encroaching on the streets of the city.

In some places a network of lanes and roads, with here and there a rosinha, or country-house, stretches between the city and the woods, while in others the streets are bounded by the forest itself.

The woman, of whose name Aubrey De Lancy was in hot pursuit, made with rapid steps the forest, looking back over her shoulder and her panting was fast decreasing, when she suddenly disappeared in the dense growth. Aubrey followed with swift bounds. At every turn in the path, he fancied he saw a flutter of drapery, but he was mistaken.

The woman was nowhere in sight. Determined not to give up the search, he explored every accessible spot, which in his judgment could serve for a hiding-place. Leaving him for a time, we will follow the woman, Laura Burleigh. Parting a thick curtain of vines that hung from the interlaced boughs of two huge trees, she stepped into a well-worn, narrow, winding path. Twisting and turning through labyrinthine thickets which would have bewildered any one unaccustomed to traverse the path, she was at length reached a small house, rather low, but buried and entirely hidden beneath its weight of foliage. She lifted a portion of the tangled mass, and revealed the door. Opening this with a key, which she took from her pocket, she entered.

The interior was in semi-gloom. A couple of hammocks, a table, two roughly-made seats, and some broken boxes comprised the contents of the cabin.

The woman went to the aperture that served for a window and pushed aside the clustering spms. The entering light revealed her form and face. She appeared to be about twenty-five years of age. She was tall and commanding in figure, and yet graceful. When she removed the small hat she wore, a rich mass of golden hair was shaken down upon her neck and shoulders. Her complexion was clear red and white—resembling white satin tinged with the faint pink of an opening rose. In the cheeks and lips the rose tint was deeper. Her eyes were intensely black, and placed so close together as to give her face a sinister expression, but when the eyelids dropped, it would be hard to find a more peacefully faultless face.

She moved actively at home in the cabin. From a small recess in the wall she took a flask of wine, and then searched for other provisions. She found nothing.

"He has not been here lately," she said. She went out, soon returning with bananas and oranges, which grew in abundance around Para. These she laid on the table and began her repast.

While she was engaged in this way, the door opened, and a man entered. It was

Rosa Burleigh—a strong muscular man, about the same age and height as Aubrey De Lancy, somewhat resembling him in figure; and possessing the sinister eyes so remarkable in his otherwise beautiful sister.

His sister acknowledged his entrance by a long, scrutinizing glance.

"You are greatly changed, Rosa," she said. "You are paler and thinner than when I last saw you a month ago."

"I've no doubt of that," he answered in a rough, low voice.

She waited for him to continue. He did not seem inclined to do so, but threw himself on one of the hammocks.

"Try this," she said, offering him the flask.

He took a long pull at it, and then raised himself into a sitting posture.

"Well," he said, "any news?"

"Oas or two scraps. I am no longer governor of the Rio de Vastro. I received my commission from her papa a week ago."

"The duke?"

"Oh, no, papa de Vastro is not the duke. He's a rather nice old fool. The fact is, he happened to see me one evening going into your establishment in the Rua dos Mercadores. The next day he asked what I did in a gambling house. Of course, I couldn't tell him that my brother was his keeper, and that I was going to see him on particular business. That wouldn't do. A governor must have none but respectable relations, and so I made up a pathetic little story about a dying man, who had been driven to destruction by my refusal to marry him, having sent for me to console his last moments. The old wretch wouldn't believe it, though I cried a great deal, and almost broke poor Inez's sympathies."

"Don't be vulgar. I resigned, finding that the situation did not agree with me."

"I say, Laura, where do you propose to go?"

"To the United States!"

"To the United States!" he repeated, in amazement.

"To the land of the free, my dear brother, to our native land," she answered, contemptuously. "And I think you had better try another climate, too."

"No; I'll not leave this until I obtain revenge." The demoniac look that for a moment transfigured his face, raised his sister's curiosity to the highest pitch; but she was aware that a direct question would not be the surest way of gratifying it.

"Have you been informed that the authorities have closed the saloon in the Rua dos Mercadores?"

"Impossible!" he cried, starting up. "By no means. Fools will never be plucked at your little game in that festive hall again. You of course know that you and your confederates are accused of robbing various persons on their way to Para. Perhaps, this accounts for your seclusion."

"What! Do you mean to say that they've found us out?"

"Exactly. The police are searching for you. I came here to warn you."

"And for no other reason?"

"That is my affair."

"Who set them on the scent?"

"Calisto, one of your Tapuyas."

"The accused redden!" If he crosses my path, he'll not live to profit by his treachery."

"There's no time to talk of that now. You had better think of your own safety. Go, for the country is quickly as possible."

"I don't hesitate an instant, if I could bury my knife to its hilt in young De Lancy's heart before going."

"Is Laura?" she started in astonishment.

"You know him?"

"He was extremely eager to join me a few moments ago. Has he injured you?"

"He has foiled me. A ball from his revolver almost prevented me from securing the Sea of Fire. I killed a man—the Tapuya Antonio—for it, but young De Lancy wrested it from me. As I lay slumped upon the ground, I saw Antonio give it to him. Then I became senseless with rage and pain. When I grew conscious, I crawled slowly to the nearest hut. It belonged to a Tapuya of our band. My wound was painful but not serious, and the Indian cured it. I remained with him until to-day."

"Aubrey De Lancy possesses the Ruby, then?"

"Of course he has—yes."

"He is fortunate," said Laura Burleigh. "Not an hour ago I heard—by simply standing unobserved in the De Lancy verandah—that old De Lancy has come into a large property in Pennsylvania. They are going to close the bank, and start for the North."

There was a pause.

"Well, I am determined never to lose sight of the Ruby," said Rosa Burleigh, as if it were a matter of course, and as if it were getting too hot here, we had better lookout North somewhere near the De Lancy's."

"Agreed. Our maternal relative will be delighted to see us."

"Doubtful, if we don't take with us the Ruby."

"We're not safe here, Rosa. Aubrey De Lancy is on my track. As I had concluded to leave Para, I felt that I could not go without securing a souvenir of my journey here. I presented a check at the De Lancy Bank, and drew three thousand dollars."

"Who signed it?"

"I signed it for my employer, Señor de Vastro."

Rosa Burleigh eyed her with unqualified admiration.

"By Jove, Laura!" he exclaimed. "You're a wonderful woman! That was a haul. We'll have a tight little sum to begin operations with in Uncle Sam's territory."

"We," repeated the woman, with an ironical smile.

"Look here, Laura, don't put on airs now. I've some cash of my own. When shall we start?"

"As soon as possible. The Gloria sails to-day, and we'll have to wait for the next steamer. Do you know of a more secure hiding place than this?"

Rosa Burleigh reflected a moment.

"Yes," he answered. "There are one or two snug places on the Island of Mexico. We can wait there as long as we choose."

"Inez de Vastro is to meet me on the edge of the forest at sunset. I told her that I intended to leave Para. Poor fool! She thinks her father's treatment me very cruel. She'll bring her jewels presents to poor, persecuted me, and we may as well wait for them, Rosa."

"By all means. I intend to marry that girl, Laura."

"Who? Inez de Vastro?"

"Inez de Vastro. I've thought about it some time."

"You shall not!" said Laura, arising, and angrily pacing up and down the cabin.

"You shall not! I'll not let her fall into your clutches. I've a kind of tenderness for the innocent little thing."

"So have I," responded her brother, coolly. "Be reasonable, Laura. I'll marry her, and she can be used as a means of

#### THE ROYAL WEDDING.

Alfred Ernest, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was married at St. Petersburg recently to the Princess Marie, of Russia, is the third child and second son of Queen Victoria, and was born on the 6th of August, 1844. He entered the Navy and has risen to high rank. It is said he fell in love with the Grand Duchess Marie when she was a rather precocious but very sweet-faced girl of fourteen, and that the marriage is a love match. The Grand Duchess speaks English fluently, and will bring her husband a dowry of 1,000,000 roubles down, and £20,000 a year, which will make the Duke one of the richest dowerless princes in Europe. The Duke is heir to his uncle, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and will one day rule over that small but snug Principality. The Grand Duchess is nineteen years old. Without pretensions to pretensions, we are told that she is simple, which implies expression and sweetness of disposition.

The wedding took place in the Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, in the presence of a vast assemblage of guests. The bride was splendidly attired in a long crimson velvet mantle, trimmed with ermine, and wore a diamond coronet. Her train was borne by four pages. Then followed an immense procession, comprising the Imperial family—Princess, Princesses and court officials.

The happy pair were twice married, first with the Greek service, during which crowns were held suspended over their heads. The Imperial Confessor then said: "Thou servant of God, Alfred Ernest Edward, art crowned for this hand-maiden of God, Maria Alexandrovna, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Forasmuch as the New Testament were then read, including the marriage at Cana of Galilee. Then the crowns were removed and the married couple walked thrice around the raised dais holding to the tip of the Confessor's robe with one hand and a candle in the other. At the conclusion of this ceremony the sacramental cup was brought forward, blessed and partaken of by the bride pair, the confessor presenting the cross which they both kissed. The Deacon gave an eloquent admonition on the marriage duties. Afterward the chant was sung by the choir. "Glory to thee, O God!" concluding with the benediction. Thus ended the Greek service.

The party then proceeded to the Hall of Alexander where the Anglican service was performed, Dean Stanley, of Westminster Abbey, officiating. When the crowd dispersed there was a frightful rush on the stairs. There was a wonderful mass of color and decorations composed of uniforms, turbans, Asiatic flowing robes from Bokhara and Samarkand, Big Cossack Guards with silver helmets surmounted by golden eagles, and Chamberlains and Equerries. Much attention was paid by the Russian dignitaries to Governor Jewell and family, who are extremely popular. Criticism was made on the appearance of the bridegroom. His reserved and solemn manner created an unfavorable impression. The Prince and Princess of Wales's affability was checked on their coming on the street.

The police were engaged in driving back the crowd, and the Cossack horsemen charged to and fro clearing the way for distinguished personages. The magnificent St. Petersburg church bell was pealed during the day, and salvoes of artillery, 101 guns were fired in conclusion of the Greek service, all forming an extraordinary combination of ceremony, wealth, pomp and splendor.

#### A Curious Old Memorandum.

We have supposed that no record of our Savior's life older than the New Testament was known to exist; but it seems that a venerable journal is carefully preserved in Nablos (ancient Samaria), in which the following item appears in the handwriting of one of the Samaritan high priests:

"In the year from Adam 4281, in the nineteenth year of my pontificate, Jesus, the Son of Mary, was crucified at Jerusalem."

This curious and interesting record was shown by the western high priest, who keeps it among the archives of his church, to Dr. El Kary, a Protestant missionary, Jewish descent and a native of Nablos. The doctor learned that the old journals of the priests of the Samaritan synagogues are still in existence, dating back to fifty or sixty years before Christ was born. It was the custom, he says, of all the high priests to set down in their books any notable events that happened during their term of office. He also learned that the



BY MISS S. PORTMAN.

than I had ever been in my life. A  
wre to be given at "The Abbey." My  
t and head were full of St. John Carr.  
and that afternoon given me the flowers  
as so carefully arranging in my hair,

in the little hall, George's step; I had  
need to love it now; what could bring him  
our cottage so soon. I was not long left  
doubt.

and thereby, still brand France with the mark of moral inferiority. She possessed all the qualities of that epoch but one heroic quality—that of courage on the battle-field. "De-

## BY DE BODICHON.

ing that epoch but one heroic quality  
of courage on the battle-field. "De-

g the circumstances, "the right one  
not come at all." The story needs to  
ments, and embodies its own con-  
ions.

penetrated for by the forced expiration of laughter, and the larger amount of thus called to the lungs. We always feel good when we laugh, but until now, we knew the scientific reason why.

fect a positive cure.  
 25 cents per box. Sold by Druggists.  
**R. RADWAY & CO., 22 Warren St.,**  
**New York.**

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## LOVE'S INDECISION.

BY MILLIE W. CARPENTER.

While Maud stood by the garden gate and Lucie in the door above, I looked in the moonlight late, and which to choose to be my love.

For Maud seemed like a wild-flower fair, Robbed in her soft, white, daisy dress, And Lucie had a wealth of hair, With gold beads in each braided tress.

Maud had a cheek fresh as a rose, And Lucie had blue, love-lit eyes; But then Maud had a certain nose, And Lucie had a certain nose.

Though Lucie was noble and wise, Maud sighed, "How lovely is the night! How sweet that cooling wood-rack sleep! And how the light breeze sighs, The tiny lamp beneath her wings."

Then Lucie in her long, dim room, Sang soft and clear a sweet love air, Then brought a taper in the gloom, And placed it on the great hall stair.

The light fell on the rath-laid floor, And streamed across the lawn, a wide bright pathway, leading from the door To guide me to my maiden's side.

I knew the way, I guessed what came, We kept for one who might come; What hand would be untroubled to meet My kiss on finger, palm and thumb.

But yonder was that pale of grass, With atmosphere of white, daisy dress, Ah! where could one more sweetly pass An hour than in that fragrant dusk?

Maud drew her heart about her head, And turned—then called in quick distress, "My name! Then Maud's name, and Maud's name, Ah, see! this Maud's name, my name."

I tore the thorn away, Her hand Stole soft to mine, The moon waxed late, And later, smiling broad and late, I put two fingers by the gate.

## DAVY CROCKETT ON THE TRACK;

The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE," "JOHN FARMER'S PLOT," ETC.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE FINDING OF THE GOLD.

It was an exciting situation in which we left our characters. The struggle in the darkness between Crockett and his powerful antagonist continued in perfect silence. They spoke not, they scarcely breathed, their whole systems were strained in the most violent muscular exertion, yet not a limb moved.

They were so equally matched in strength that, for some minutes, neither gained the slightest advantage over the other.

Then the trained and untiring muscles of the hunter began to assert their superior force. Henderson had not been raised in this severe school, and his powers of endurance gradually yielded as the hunter seemed to throw new strength into his sinewy grasp.

The outlaw yielded, took one staggering step backward, and the next moment was lifted bodily and flung with dangerous force on the rocky floor of the cave.

Meanwhile the light-bearer advanced rapidly, hastened by a call from Ned Gordon. The latter impatiently raised his back, snatched a burning brand from the pan, his figure making a perilous mark for a rifle bullet as he stood a moment with it upraised in his hand. The next instant he flung it whirling down the whole length of the cave. The flaming scintillations of the burning brand lit up the whole length of the cave as it hurtled through it, revealing the hunters, who had hastily drawn to the side out of the line of their antagonist's fire, and the two struggling men, who were yet locked in deadly effort.

It passed on in a blazing lustre over the spot where the outlaws had a moment before been revealed by the flash of their weapons, and this part of the cave was illuminated as though a lightning flash had lit it up.

But it was empty. Only the white walls and floor of the cavern appeared. No human form was visible. The party, who an instant before had fired upon them, had disappeared as if by magic. Gordon seized another brand and with perilous boldness ran with it down the cave to where it again contracted to a narrow passage, and thrust it into this passage, and keenly glanced down the dark avenue. In doing this his peril was less than it appeared, any occupant of the avenue, facing him, would have been inevitably revealed by the glare of the flaming torch in his hand, and the daring man was prepared to hurl the torch from him and sink to the ground at the slightest indication of danger.

None appeared, however. Both the cave and the avenue seemed empty of their law-breaking occupants, save the silent figure beside which the dog crouched, savagely growling, and the form of the leader, who, as it seemed, were he had just been thrown by his powerful antagonist.

"A bit of rope here, lads, if any of you has got such an article," spoke the voice of Crockett. "Turn your pan round and throw a glimpse here. The rest of the hounds are heading it, and we can afford to light up."

In a moment a length of stout cord was forthcoming, and the hands of the prostrate villain were firmly bound behind him.

Whether he had been really insensible, or only feigning with the hope of an opportunity of escape, could not be told. At any rate his senses quickly returned when the rope passed in tightening lengths round his wrists. His feet were also shackled, so that it was impossible for him to make a long step.

He rose from his prostrate position at the harsh command of his captor, glancing round the luridly illuminated throng with a lowering, savage expression that looked ill for them should they ever fall into his power. Particularly when his eyes fell on the form of the disguised man who had guided his enemies into the depths of his stronghold, did the savage nature of the desperado burn in its full fury from his fierce depths, and if looks had been fatal Ned Gordon must have fallen dead on the spot.

He spoke not, however, but awaited in sullen dignity the will of his captors. "Now let's look after the fellow here that the dog's got in limbo," said Crockett, advancing toward the motionless man.

The light-carrier threw the gleam of his pan upon the form of the fallen robber. "About as I expected," said the hunter, after a momentary glance. "Whirlwind don't do nothing by halves. That poor devil has given us all the trouble he's like to."

"Why?" said Baldwin, pressing more closely up.

"The dog's teeth has opened his juglar. The man's clean bled to death. Whirlwind thought he had bled of some wild varmint, and he wasn't far out."

The others crowded up and gazed with a solemn interest on the face of the dead man, that feeling which naturally arises in seeing one, who an instant before was all of vigorous life, now still in the pallid and painless rest of death.

"What shall we do with the corpse?" asked Baldwin, in an awe-stricken tone. "Drag it a bit to the side, and leave it there. There's not a deeper or a better grave than this to be had. It's only good luck saved one of us from being the mark for his bullet, but the poor rascal's past harm now."

The eyes of the prisoner were fixed with a kind of fascination upon the corpse, while an expression of horror filled his face. Some thought of the menacing end to his own wicked course of life seemed to have come upon him in the dreadful face of his accomplice, and he appeared to be seeking in vain to withdraw his glance from the encrimsoned spectacle.

A look of relief crossed his face when they had drawn the corpse out of his line of vision, into the shadowy depths of the apartment, and the expression of remorse and horror was replaced by the old glare of hatred and revengeful feeling.

"Where's the workshop of the rascals?" asked Crockett, turning to the guide.

"Not far on. A few steps will bring us to it."

"Go ahead then, some of you, and see what's to be found there. I'll stay here, with Ben Baldwin, and one or two more. It won't do to go ahead and leave our rear without a guard. There's no telling what devilry the varmints will be up to, but they'd best be sure they're right afore they try to circumvent Davy Crockett. Light 'em up and leave it over the ledge of rock there. Old Ben wants to keep his eye open if there's any loose devilry afoot. The balance of you can forge ahead with the pan you've got lit. But be as keen as razors, for you've got wide-awake critters to deal with. Keep out of the glare till you're sure there's a clear coast. Dig on, lads, and don't waste time. I'll take care of our sour-looking friend here."

The party accordingly divided, Baldwin and another remaining with Crockett, and so stationing themselves in the shadows of the cave as to be out of the glare of the light.

The others went on under the leadership of their guide. Cautiously proceeding, and examining every point with the greatest care before venturing to advance, they at length emerged into a chamber of the cave that seemed to be the spot alluded to as the workshop of the counterfeiters.

Its centre was occupied by a large table, surrounded by chairs, but against the wall was a small furnace, with bellows and other appliances. Just above it was a crevice in the rock, extending upward, which possibly had a connection with the outer air and served as chimney to the furnace.

Numerous tools were scattered over the table, and in a closet which stood open against the wall many more were visible. There were several pieces of light machinery, forges, lathes, cutting and grinding wheels, &c., all fitted to be worked by foot-power. In fact it was a completely fitted-up establishment for some illicit manufacture.

What this manufacture was appeared in numerous gold coins which lay scattered over the table, some neatly split into two halves and a portion of the gold being gone, others were found, like that which Gordon had shown, in which this hollow had been refilled with lead or some other heavy metal, and the halves so neatly joined as almost to defy scrutiny.

There were evidences also of other modes of counterfeiting—pieces of an alloy closely resembling gold, stamps bearing the devices of the various gold coins, and stores of the metals from which this alloy must have been made.

"A complete counterfeiting den," said Gordon, looking curiously around. "Just slip some of those stamps and cut pieces and other things into your pockets. We will want them as evidence, if these fellows can't be brought to trial. I want to take a look around their closets here. There is another piece of rascality that I hope to nail on them."

Several closets stood round the wall, besides the one that was open. But these were locked and the keys removed. Without aid Gordon quickly opened them by means of a heavy hammer which he picked up from the floor, smashing the locks so that the doors swung readily open.

They contained a great variety of tools, bottles of chemical ingredients, and a large number of articles whose purpose was quite unknown to those present.

The last closet opened was stronger and more firmly locked than the others. But his vigorous blows soon supplied the action of keys, and the broken bolts ceased to confine the secrets which might lie concealed behind the door.

This being opened revealed several shelves, two of which were fitted up with drawers. These, in their turn, were locked, but the same key he had used on the outer lock soon opened them.

Others gathered close up, with brands that had lit at the burning pan. The fire in this pan was now nearly burned out, but they had enough remaining of the light wood to kindle a blaze in one pan that would suffice to light them to the entrance of the cave.

When the drawers then were pulled open they found the torches there on a heap of gold coins that dazzled the eyes and the imaginations of the lookers-on.

"By the hokey! there's a cool fortune there for the pile of us," cried one of the men exultingly.

"What is it?" asked another.

"A drawer full of gold. The biggest pile I ever seed in my born days."

"A clever hundred thousand, I should reckon."

"You'd reckon rather steeply then," said Gordon, with some contempt in his tone. "There is not more than five thousand at the most."

"What do you know about it?" asked the other, angrily.

"I've handled more gold than you ever saw, or are ever likely to see," answered Gordon, coolly. "What is more, I don't think any of us will have the chance to spend this."

"What's the reason why?"

"I'll tell you why—and I want you all to take particular notice of what I am going to say. Will you just pull out that piece of canvas that lies in the back part of the lower drawer."

"It's a canvas bag," said the man, drawing it out and examining it.

"There's some fingers here, but I never was good at fingers."

"I've handled more gold than you ever saw, or are ever likely to see," answered Gordon, coolly. "What is more, I don't think any of us will have the chance to spend this."

"What's the reason why?"

"In course I do."

"I want you all to bear these points in mind, for they are very important."

"But what the thunder are you a-driving at, stranger?"

"This money does not belong to us, nor to the counterfeiters. It was stolen by us, about three months ago, from the Leather Bank of Louisville."

"How do you know that?" asked another of the men. "One piece of gold is pretty much like another."

"I know it for several reasons. In the first place, I came to this part of the country on the track of the robbers of that gold. In the second, Jack Henderson, the leader of this gang, and the man whom Crockett has got in rope-handcuffs out there, is the thief who stole it. In the third place this is the bag that held it at the time it was stolen. It has the bank mark on it, and can be identified by any of the officers."

"I've heard of that robbery," said the first speaker.

"We have all the good we want out of this place," said Gordon, in a tone in which a certain sense of relief was evident. "Put the money into the bag. Give it into Davy Crockett's hands. You don't know me, but you can trust him."

"I'd sooner trust him than the best bank that ever was built," said the other speaker.

"Very well then, I will send word to the bank officers of our discovery. If they can prove their property, we will hand our find and our prisoner both over to them. Is that the correct thing?"

"Certainly it is," said one of the men.

"There's no man born on the site of Tennessee, and particular in the shadow of the backwoods, as wants what he hasn't earned, and doesn't mean enough to take what he knows won't come by honestly."

"That's the right way to look at it," said Gordon. "You take charge of this bag till we get into daylight again. Then it can be handed over to Crockett."

"All right, boss. All I want's a fat deer, and a drink of bear lip now and then, and gold kin go a-begging for all I care."

"Now let us get into the daylight as soon as possible," said Gordon. "Our blaze will not hold out much longer, and it would be mighty awkward to be caught here in the dark. Keep your eyes sharp open. We are not out of danger of bullets yet."

He died quickly out of the underground workshop of the counterfeiters, leaving it much the worse for their visit.

A short walk brought them to where Davy and his companions stood, in the shadows of the cave, the light still burning dimly where it had been placed on the rock.

The hunter stood with his rifle in readiness, in case any of their secret enemies should seek to tamper with this important aid to their onward journey.

Behind him sat the prisoner, closely watched by one of the party, his face full of the sullen and savage feelings which were passing through his mind.

It would have fared ill at that moment with his captor could their places have been reversed. There was the passion which springs to murder in his looks.

"Any luck?" asked Davy, as the others came up.

"The best," answered Gordon. "But we have no time now to describe it. We must seek the outside while our light holds out."

Yet more savage glance was bent by the prisoner on this speaker, with a slight start as he spoke of their luck. They were too intent on other matters, however, to observe the expressions of his countenance.

"You're sound on that pint," said Davy. "Let's get out of this blasted hole in as short metro as the shortest hymn in the hymn-book. This is out of the bar-track, and headquarters is among the varmints. So let's get it."

The balance of the wood in their possession was placed in the one pan, the fire set ablaze again, and they took up their route in the same manner as before, all passing on in advance of the light-bearer, and keenly glancing ahead for evidences of a foe in their path.

The prisoner was placed in the middle of the line, one man grasping him by the coat-collar while another held an end of the rope that bound his hands.

In this way they reached the main passage through the cave, and began their journey directly toward the entrance, Crockett, who led the way, turning with a moment's hesitation into the direct path.

The passage contracted as they proceeded, till it became quite narrow, and it wound to such an extent that, when the main party emerged into an extensive chamber of the cavern ahead, they were in almost complete darkness, the light being hid by the curving path, and only dispelling the gloom where they stood.

They paused a moment, with rifles ready and eyes roving keenly about, waiting for the re-appearance of the light.

At this instant a shrill whistle resounded through the cave, reverberating from the walls and roof until they were half deafened by the multiplied sound.

Simultaneously the light, which had just turned the corner of the pass, was snatched violently from the hands of the man who held it, and disappeared quickly in the way they had come, leaving them in total darkness.

But this was not the only or the most startling result of the signal. With the last gleam of light a dark form had risen up beside the prisoner. A quick stroke of a knife released his hands from their bonds. A hairy, wriggling evolution, and only his coat remained in the hands of the man who had so firmly grasped it, while the other held but the cut end of a rope.

"Down, boys!" cried Davy. "Out with your knives, and let them have it if you feel a breath."

They crouched none too soon. A deafening roar succeeded the momentary stillness, as several rifles cracked nearly together, and three or four bullets hurtled over the spot where they had a moment before stood.

But a single report answered. It was the well known voice of old Hestey. Firing at the flash Davy displayed the keenness of his senses in the result of this uncertain shot, as a stifled cry of pain showed that his quarry had been hit.

lightly to the disheartening impulse of terror. Grasping their knives firmly they continued to crouch close to the floor of the cave, waiting in silence and desperation the unknown form of the attack which they expected to be made upon them.

The darkness and silence continued unbroken, minute after minute passed, and their nerves were strained nearly to agony in the terrible suspense of their situation.

And still the moments passed, and still their foe made no sign, and still the crouching men grasped their knives and set their teeth with the fierceness of desperation.

## CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

It was with a sense of bitter disappointment and fierce anger that Rob Gordon beheld the flight of the boat which he was so near to capture. He had been so near to capture the boat which he was so near to capture.

He raised his rifle with an involuntary gesture, and would have fired but for his companion, who quickly said:

"Too far, Rob. No use burning powder and wasting lead for that distance. You're a good shot, but you can't touch him. See, he's ducked too; he's afraid of taking a lead pill."

Rob lowered his weapon without pulling trigger, as if satisfied that his companion was right. He stood looking with a dark, indignant glance after the retreating vessel, his heart full of pain and bitterness of feeling.

"Come, man, wake up," said the other. "There's work afore you, moping won't pay. What's more, I don't see any woman's gal flying aboard that craft. Maybe the gal's not there."

"She is there," Rob answered. "She is at this moment in the cabin, planned in misery at her cruel fate. Oh, that she had been seen; but realized that vengeance would upon the track of her persecutor. It would have given her a hope to replace the despair which she must now feel."

"All right, boss. All I want's a fat deer, and a drink of bear lip now and then, and gold kin go a-begging for all I care."

"Now let us get into the daylight as soon as possible," said Gordon. "Our blaze will not hold out much longer, and it would be mighty awkward to be caught here in the dark. Keep your eyes sharp open. We are not out of danger of bullets yet."

He died quickly out of the underground workshop of the counterfeiters, leaving it much the worse for their visit.

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Behind him sat the prisoner, closely watched by one of the party, his face full of the sullen and savage feelings which were passing through his mind.

It would have fared ill at that moment with his captor could their places have been reversed. There was the passion which springs to murder in his looks.

"Any luck?" asked Davy, as the others came up.

"The best," answered Gordon. "But we have no time now to describe it. We must seek the outside while our light holds out."

Yet more savage glance was bent by the prisoner on this speaker, with a slight start as he spoke of their luck. They were too intent on other matters, however, to observe the expressions of his countenance.

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The balance of the wood in their possession was placed in the one pan, the fire set ablaze again, and they took up their route in the same manner as before, all passing on in advance of the light-bearer, and keenly glancing ahead for evidences of a foe in their path.

The prisoner was placed in the middle of the line, one man grasping him by the coat-collar while another held an end of the rope that bound his hands.

In this way they reached the main passage through the cave, and began their journey directly toward the entrance, Crockett, who led the way, turning with a moment's hesitation into the direct path.

The passage contracted as they proceeded, till it became quite narrow, and it wound to such an extent that, when the main party emerged into an extensive chamber of the cavern ahead, they were in almost complete darkness, the light being hid by the curving path, and only dispelling the gloom where they stood.

They paused a moment, with rifles ready and eyes roving keenly about, waiting for the re-appearance of the light.

At this instant a shrill whistle resounded through the cave, reverberating from the walls and roof until they were half deafened by the multiplied sound.

Simultaneously the light, which had just turned the corner of the pass, was snatched violently from the hands of the man who held it, and disappeared quickly in the way they had come, leaving them in total darkness.

But this was not the only or the most startling result of the signal. With the last gleam of light a dark form had risen up beside the prisoner. A quick stroke of a knife released his hands from their bonds. A hairy, wriggling evolution, and only his coat remained in the hands of the man who had so firmly grasped it, while the other held but the cut end of a rope.

"Down, boys!" cried Davy. "Out with your knives, and let them have it if you feel a breath."

They crouched none too soon. A deafening roar succeeded the momentary stillness, as several rifles cracked nearly together, and three or four bullets hurtled over the spot where they had a moment before stood.

But a single report answered. It was the well known voice of old Hestey. Firing at the flash Davy displayed the keenness of his senses in the result of this uncertain shot, as a stifled cry of pain showed that his quarry had been hit.

It was, however, a most desperate and perilous position in which the hunters now found themselves. Plunged into a darkness deeper than they had ever dreamed possible, the daylight only to be reached by a long and winding and unknown passage through this terrible gloom, the momentary uproar of the rifle shots succeeded by a silence as dreadful as the darkness, and surrounded by merciless foes to whom every curve of the cave was familiar, it was not surprising that something very like terror took possession of their hearts.

They had all started in their time, but it had been in the open air, on the battle-field, or in deadly conflict with wild beasts; never in such a helpless and awe-inspiring situation as this.

Yet they were not the men to yield

The wind was rather fresh, and fair for their present direction, so that they swept off with a free sail, and the wind swept eastern.

These preparations, speedily as they had been made, had consumed time, and in this interval the chase had crept past the town, and was still forging ahead, with a rapid motion, under cover of the wooded western bank of the river.

The prow of the Dart, as their present craft was euphonically entitled, was not turned directly toward the fleeing vessel, but down the stream, keeping well in to their own side.

Rob, in his impatience, was not all pleased with this movement. He sat closely angling his rifle, and was on the point of questioning the object of the boatman when the latter volunteered an explanation.

"I've seen that craft before," he said. "And I know she's a tip-top sailer. I don't allow as she can come up to the Dart, but she can keep her to her work. They're not doing their best now. Fast is they're not got a full show of sail. Now if they've a stolen girl aboard, you'd think their game would be to make the most of this breeze, and show Brownstown their heels."

"Then it's your notion that they ain't played their whole hand yet," said Tom.

"Exactly. They likely want to take somebody off to-night. They're thought it best not to lay at their anchoring place, but it's my reckoning that they'll be back there before it's long dark."

"If we don't worry them a bit too much."

"That's what we'll try hard. I don't want them to think we're after them. With the start they've got, we would have a thundering long chase. You can see we're forging up on them a trifle."

"I see that. We're gaining sideways."

"There's a bend in the river about a mile ahead. You may see it there, where the woods cut off the water. They've got to take the long curve to go round that, while we can stretch straight across. That will give us an even start, and a quarter of a mile advantage. If I don't lay the Dart alongside of them afore they get round the corner, then I'll sell her for froward."

This confident tone roused Rob from the depression into which his inaction, and his ignorance of the helmsman's purpose, were again throwing him.

He caught at a glance the nature of the project, and the great advantage it gave them, so long as the fugitive party remained in ignorance of their object. It was then highly advisable to keep the fact of their being pursued from their knowledge as long as possible, for by changing their course, and heading up stream, they could recover the advantage of start and position of which it was the object to deprive them.

So both boats moved on, apparently disconnected with each other, yet the minds of the one crew set on the opposite craft with an intense interest, that became painful in the case of the anxious lover.

The chase had already struck the beginning of the curve, and was bending slowly around, the sail being hauled in a little so their altered course threw the wind more ahead.

The Dart was now creeping under the shadow of a thick growth of willow on the riverbank. She kept in this concealment until she had slightly rounded the curve, so as to bring the yacht so far advanced in its new course that it could not easily recover the advantage it was losing.

"Now for it!" the helmsman at length cried, sweeping the prow of his boat out with a quick movement of the tiller.

"We've got to show our hand. If they ain't quick at seeing our trumps, so much the worse for them. If they hold on for the eastern side, I'll lay the Dart alongside, or I know nothing about wind and water."

The river turned here to the eastward with an abrupt curve. The fugitive boat was still closely following the western bank, and had gained a considerable distance round the long curve when the Dart lay the spear of the much shorter bend on the eastern side.

The river here was about three-quarters of a mile wide, but in the diagonal course which the Dart was pursuing, it was more than a mile. The yacht, on the contrary, would have to sail out at least a mile and a half to reach the point at which the swift was aiming.

Should she turn back and attempt to sail up stream in the face of wind and current, the Dart had but to stretch directly across the stream to intercept her in this attempt.

Rob was quick in perceiving the advantage they had gained, and his spirits rose as he saw that every minute brought the two boats nearer together, and decreased the chances of the fugitive escaping.

He stood upright in the boat, and looked keenly toward the yacht, now less than half a mile distant. He



## A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

"OR, FOR OUR WORD FROM THE DEAD MAN'S LIFE!"

Dr. Chester's carriage stood before the entrance to the office of the "Eastern Telegraph Company," and the doctor himself sat quite composedly chatting with the president, while the operator dispatched this message to N—

"Hon. Earle Templeton."

"Answer at once if found."

"GROVER CHESTER, M. D."

"London, 12.40."

In an hour the response came.

"Hon. E. T. is in London."

"JAMES HARTMAN, refers."

The doctor then finished his discussion, and returned to his conveyance.

In the meantime Earle Templeton sat in his own chamber in London the very picture of despair, and Carroll Trevelyan occupied the chair to his left. They had arrived from N— but not at all before.

"And you still insist upon leaving England," said Mr. Trevelyan sadly, "when I have not seen you in all these years."

"Father, spare me," replied the other, bitterly. "The air of London, of England, suffocates me. She, your daughter, can comfort you for a few months, and then if you wish I can return, for I shall have grown sane. From it will strike you that it will be best for her that I should be away from these fearful disclosures are made."

"Yes," answered Mr. Trevelyan. "I did not mean that you should be present—but—if you would only remain here—though apart, I might see you sometimes, and—"

"Do not argue with me upon that point, father, I pray you," he cried. "I must go, and at once if you would have me escape a mad house. The farther from this accursed city the better. But you have promised me to explain why I did not always know you as my father, and bear your name. As you may imagine, it is the only matter of interest that life presents to me."

"That is soon explained," replied Mr. Trevelyan, in a melancholy tone. "It was done, when I supposed no evil could ever result from it, to spare the feelings of my only parent, who had loved me with idolatrous devotion, and who died, as you may remember, only a few weeks after the celebration of my marriage to Florence Eglington. My marriage with your mother, Earle, was truly an unfortunate one. I met her when I was too young to know anything of the world, and its myriad shades of character and crimes, and loving her with boyish impetuosity, I married her in three weeks from the day of our first meeting. The marriage of course was a profound secret, unknown to every relation she had except one female cousin and her father. This had been readily done at my suggestion to shield me from the stern displeasure of my father, of whom they had heard enough to feel assured that he would forever disinherit me on the slightest intimation of such an alliance; for the father of my wife was a poor French gentleman who lived in an almost starving condition on the borders of Wales, where he had married a plain English girl. The reason with which they consented to such mad proposals from me, ought to have warned me that their sole object was to secure the fortune which I was to inherit, but love, as has been truly said, is blind, and I had no such idea at the time. My wife, however, had given her heart to a young Welshman before we met, and though gentle and lady-like to the end, I am persuaded that she welcomed death when it came to her but a few weeks after you, my son, were born. She had consented to marry me only to please her father, and as I believe, died of a broken heart for having done so."

"There was then no foundation for the story that I was even remotely related to Athol Templeton," said Earle.

"Yes," replied Mr. Trevelyan. "Though it was very distant, and unrecognized. Your maternal grandfather had been expropriated for some cause, and had taken the name of his wife, which was Templeton. And hence your mother was known as Louisa Templeton to the hour of her death."

"Then how came that superannuated madman, Athol Templeton, to declare that my father was murdered, and my mother perhaps the instigator of the deed?" asked the young man, bitterly.

"Your inquiry brings me to the saddest part of my narrative," replied Mr. Trevelyan. "Hume Templeton, the eldest and best beloved son of old Athol, had been with me at home, at Oxford, and at Cambridge, and at the time I speak of we had been as inseparable as brothers. He had gone with me on that fatal hunting excursion when we first stopped one night to find shelter at Ludlow, the ruinous old seat at which my wife's father resided. The female cousin, who, I informed you, was a witness of my marriage, was a Miss Marcia Templeton—a person of beautiful, high-spirited woman. And Elizabeth Woodville did not appear with more grace before Edward IV. than she did before Hume Templeton. He too determined to risk all things for love, and but a week after my marriage he espoused her. But her high, proud spirit could not brook obscurity, and when she found herself about to become a mother, she persuaded Hume to throw himself at his father's feet, and confess all. The young man knew that he was defying the thunderbolt of Jupiter. Athol Templeton spurned him from his presence with the bitterest curses, and Hume, in a fit of desperation joined the army, and was killed in a private difficulty with a fellow soldier in a few months. This Marcia Templeton had a brother—an abandoned, dissolute fellow whom I saw but once—and whom they called Barr Templeton. This man had married a short time previous, a girl of low connections, who was thought to be but half-witted, though very pretty, and after her marriage a dissipated associate of Barr Templeton began to make love to her. She seems to have kept aloof from him, and yet to have given him encouragement enough for him to commit a desperate crime. He murdered her husband, as many believed, with her consent. He was, however, immediately arrested, and in giving birth to a son the woman had died."

"A singular fatality seemed to hang over these unfortunate Templetons. My wife had died, leaving me an infant son. This woman and her child were dead, and within a few weeks the widow of Hume Templeton and her infant were buried together. Then it was, Earle, that your grandfather proposed to me to bring you up in the eyes of his household as the child of Barr Templeton, which would affirm to be still living. For your mother had died, as it was supposed, in her maidenhood. This was supposed to be a view to save you the inheritance that would ultimately come through me, for my father would undoubtedly have served me as Athol Tem-

pleton had Hume, and cut me off without a shilling. My wife having died as stated, there was no need for me to confirm the marriage, but every reason as you see, why I should keep it a profound secret than ever. You were then, as you will see, introduced to your grandfather's household as his unfortunate nephew. It was thus that old Athol Templeton had heard something of you. A few years afterward I took you away forever to be educated as my ward. And when you left school you had not a relation on your mother's side alive. For some time, that is, for a few weeks previous to my mysterious disappearance and supposed death, I had been deliberating whether it might not be best to explain these circumstances to you. And but one thing had caused me to hesitate. One of those old connections, Barr Templeton's wife's sister, had followed me up relentlessly, and was constantly threatening me with all those old, painful revelations as a means of extorting money. This woman had lived at Ludlow as a sort of servant, because they had wished, if possible, to protect her from a life of worse degradation, but she eventually wandered off, and became, as I have said, a lawless outcast. What is it, Carlos?"

Earle Templeton's servant was looking in.

"Dr. Chester, sir, to see Mr. Templeton."

"You did not have him summoned, supposing I needed a physician?" began Earle, angrily.

"No, sir. He says, if you please, he wants to see you on a matter of business that can be dispatched in a moment."

"I do not care to offend him; but his visit is most inopportune. Where is he?"

"In your audience-room, sir."

Templeton followed the servant, and in a few moments was bowing cordially to his visitor.

"I am obliged to you, as I understand your visit is one of business."

"I had fancied I might be able to oblige you, sir," returned George Chester, composedly. "Briefly, Mr. Templeton, there is an old outcast—a woman—whom I had all along thought delicious, dying in my hospital. For three weeks past she has been muttering your name and that of your old partner at law, Mr. Trevelyan. To-day I have reason to believe her in her right mind. I had some difficulty in persuading her that Mr. Trevelyan was dead. She then implored me to summon you to her side, as she was once a servant in the house of your parents, and declares that she could a secret connected with your birth of which Mr. Trevelyan and yourself were ignorant. She seemed so earnest at thought of the certain approach of death—and the visit of a second who she affirms has been bribing her to silence for twenty years, gave such coloring to her story this morning—that I thought it worth repeating to you. I think, should you be disposed to visit her, you will find her alive."

"I cannot answer for her longer. The man whom she accuses of having bribed her to silence once bore the name of Lewis Hartman—though he has passed for some years under an alias."

"Ah! in spite of Mr. Templeton's usual reserve he had for once manifested a startled interest."

"For the man's identity I can vouch, as I had occasion to give him a casing this morning."

"It is the man in whom I am interested," said Earle, endeavoring to appear calm. "If you can tell me where he is to be found you will oblige me indeed. The woman I presume is demented."

"I cannot serve you in that," replied Dr. Chester, rising. "The man, Hartman, as you may know, has for some years borne the name of Chelsea, and is one of the wealthiest unfortunates in London."

"Good God!" cried Earle Templeton, now truly startled. "And I have met that man every day for the last six months, and could not for my life tell why his sinister face haunted me like a troubled, half-forgotten dream. Doctor, you have favored me indeed. Some day you may know how greatly, and believe me, you have my thanks."

"You are quite welcome. You will not see the woman, Mr. Templeton?"

"Ah, I had forgotten her. In case I should conclude to do so, where might she be found?"

"At the Chester Hospital, Greenwich street. Name, Mrs. South, though I think they say she has retired to all points of the compass. Good morning, Mr. Templeton."

"Doctor," said Earle Templeton, clasping his hand, "we are both men of few words. Your fortunes have prospered in a worldly sense, like my own. To me they have brought only wretchedness. I trust that you have been more fortunate; but should the time come in the changes and chances of life when I might serve you, pray remember that I have a claim upon my gratitude, which I would gladly prove to you."

"And the two men parted. Dr. Chester to further usefulness, and Earle Templeton back into Mr. Trevelyan's presence."

"I have found Lewis Hartman."

Mr. Trevelyan sprang from his seat.

"Let that be done, he cried, and I will die in peace. But tell me, I pray you, how and where?"

And Earle Templeton related to him the doctor's story. He had forgotten to mention the old woman in the Chester Hospital, until the detective summoned by Mr. Trevelyan had arrived and received his instructions.

"My God, Earle!" cried Mr. Trevelyan. "The woman may have something of vital importance to relate. It is no doubt the Templeton's wife—of whom I was speaking to you not an hour ago. She has often declared that there was a secret connected with the story I related to you, of which I knew nothing. We must go to her without a moment's delay."

Carlos was sent to summon a carriage, and the instant it appeared they sprang into it.

"Chester Hospital," said Mr. Trevelyan briefly to the driver, and they were driven rapidly to their place of destination.

"We wish to see an inmate who is very ill here—Mrs. South," he said to the warden when they arrived.

"It is Mrs. South now, and a while ago it was Mrs. North," muttered Thorpe.

"Well, I dare say she is right, for she is going to a warm country as fast as a sinner ever did. This way, gentlemen," he added aloud. "The patient was sinking very fast an hour ago, you will hardly find her alive."

Mr. Trevelyan and Earle Templeton—as we shall still call him—followed the warden with quick steps down the long corridor. At last the man opened the door and beckoned them to come in.

There was a small, clean room with a single bed and a shrunken, haggard figure lying upon it. One of the nurses sat at a window with a copy of the Times.

"Nurse, is the woman dead?" asked the warden.

"She is still breathing, sir, and mutters now and then; but she is almost gone."

"Warden," said Mr. Trevelyan, "I have just seen Dr. Chester, and with his per-

mission we are to be left alone for a few moments with this creature. I should like the nurse to remove her if possible, and then retire."

"Mrs. South," cried the nurse, giving her patient a vigorous shake. "I say, Mrs. South, rouse up here, woman, you must take your toddy again now. That'll bring her back, sir, if anything will."

And in reality the dying woman opened her sunken eyes and rolled them hideously around.

"Give me the whisky," replied the nurse. "Ah, it's about time!" she cried, the complacent nurse, giving her a spoonful of the stimulant, and preparing to retire. "Now, gentlemen, is your time, or it's lost forever in this world."

Mr. Trevelyan approached the prostrate figure and bent over her. "Jane Markham," he said, slowly, but in a distinct voice, "look up once more; I, Carroll Trevelyan, am here before you. You have asked to see me."

The woman once more opened her eyes wildly, and with a spasmodic effort pointed one bony finger toward him.

"There he is," she cried, in a choking voice. "They told me he was dead, but I knew he would come back in the end to torment me. Oh, why did I ever listen to proud Marcia or old Athol Templeton?"

"Jane," said Mr. Trevelyan, "listen to me while you have time. This is no ghost that you see, but Carroll Trevelyan in flesh and blood, summoned to receive your dying confession by the doctor who has attended you. And this is the child of poor Adelaide—my son as he now knows himself to be—Earle Templeton Trevelyan."

"Ah, wo, wo!" cried the dying woman. "Carroll Trevelyan, you are all wrong, all wrong. Oh, why was I bribed to be silent all these years by the monster Hartman and his mad wife? But you must know better. The sealed papers that they gave you from Ludlow about this boy, all about him, and which you were to open only at Athol Templeton's death, would tell you—must have told you how you have been duped in all these years. Where are those papers? There was a letter for him from my mistress."

"The papers!" exclaimed Mr. Trevelyan, startled. "I let me see. My God, I gave them to the young man, Ralph Thornton, to keep, and deliver to Earle when I was last married, in case I should not live to return to N— And—and he should bring them back to me on the very night of my fatal disappearance. I had supposed them but some old family records that it would be best even my friends should not dream of. And Ralph Thornton died in shame and ignominy soon after Earle, did he say nothing to you of a box of papers in his possession left for you?"

"Poor young man! He must have been so stupefied by the evidence against him that he had little time to remember anything else," replied Templeton, unable to see how all the papers in the world could affect them, now that the secret of his birth was known.

"Give me a mouthful of spirits," gasped the woman. "The boy is cold and proud, cold and proud like her. Carroll Trevelyan, those papers would tell you that—that—Oh, God, one spoonful of whisky!"

"What would they tell?" asked Mr. Trevelyan, wondering, as he put the spoon to her mouth. The woman swallowed convulsively and half sprang up in bed.

"There she is!" she cried. "Those papers would tell you that he is her son. Oh, God forgive me! It was for the child's sake she said. The boy was to pass for your son who had died—he—"

Earle Templeton had sprung to his feet as if electrified. "Do you hear her, he cried in wild joy to Mr. Trevelyan. "She says that some fraud was secretly practiced—that I am not your son, that Angela Trevelyan may not have one drop of my blood in her veins. Just Heaven, the woman is gasping for breath. For all the world contains do not let her die until her story is finished. Give me the glass. She must be stimulated—anything if she will be helped."

He passed his arm under the woman's head, he would have done so had she been dying with small-pox, and now eagerly thrust the glass between her lips. There may have been a taste of the stimulant—the ruling passion strong in death—and she opened her set teeth. Then she gave an agonized gasp, a strangled cough, and throwing up both hands fell back dead.

"For her!" cried Earle Trevelyan. "She shall not, must not die, and he threw himself on the floor beside her. A faint glow had dawned for one moment in his soul, and it was so bitter to crush it out."

"My son," said Mr. Trevelyan sadly, "the poor, wretched creature is dead before all recall. Her words must have been true, for the ravings of a mad woman, what crime could she have been to be to you for God's sake banish them. Come, let us go hence. I long to hear of the arrest of that scoundrel Hartman. Come."

"Yes," cried Templeton, sadly, as he gathered himself up. "Let us go. But my object will be to hunt those papers up through the wide world until they are found. Do not ask me, I pray you, to call your father again, for I will never believe but that God ordained I should love her."

"Earle, Earle!" exclaimed Mr. Trevelyan. "You will drive me mad. What would she—what would the world say?"

"You are right," replied Templeton, hanging his head. "I believe I am going mad. I shall at least find them, and set all at rest, and I shall find them. The two men drove back home in silence."

At the door Mr. Trevelyan was met by a messenger announcing that Lewis Hartman Chelsea was under arrest and desired to speak with him at once.

Templeton was no sooner left alone than he began preparations for a visit to Dr. Chester. "It's known those Thorntons," he thought. "He may at least be able to tell me if any of them are on the face of the earth to-day, and if so I shall find them."

"A lady to see you, sir," said Carlos, briefly.

"Tell her I am engaged," said Templeton, sharply. "I am this moment going out."

"But you must hear me first, Earle Templeton. The time has come."

A woman's figure clad in black had silently followed, and now pushing by the astonished servant, stood before him.

"Earle Templeton, can you guess to-day who I am?"

"You are Mrs. Chelsea," he answered, even, "the wife of the unfortunate miscreant who has just been arrested, and who have come to remind me of the claim you have upon my gratitude. Carlos, you can retire. Now, madam, I will hear you, but pray be brief."

She had advanced toward him with all the concentrated loathing of twenty years in her face and voice.

"To-day," she said, "I will drop all disguise. You may know me as I am, for my curse is accomplished. Do you remember a man whom you sentenced nearly twenty years ago to be hung for the murder of Carroll Trevelyan?"

"I remember a man whom the law sentenced," replied Templeton, in a strangely hoarse voice.

"You were the maker of the law that day," cried the woman, "for on your lips every word assumed a tenfold significance, and you had decreed his punishment. Can you recall his name?"

"It was Ralph Thornton."

"Then you may also recollect that Ralph Thornton had a sister?"

"I do," said Templeton, quickly. "And I would give all I possess on earth to know that she is alive to-day."

"Man! that sister stands triumphant, after twenty years of patient waiting, before you now. I am Lilian Thornton."

"Then," cried Templeton, wildly, "behold the dust at your feet. Oh, my God! if the sacrifice of my own life could bring that brother back to me here, how gladly would I lay it down but to obtain one secret he held in his keeping."

"God has heard me at last!" exclaimed Lilian, who in spite of all the bitter years still retained a weird beauty that could not fail to impress all who beheld her. "And Ralph, my darling Ralph, is brought back. It is the secret of your birth which you had wrung from the woman just dead, that you would obtain?"

"Yes—in mercy, yes."

"Mercy!" she laughed, scornfully. "Do you remember when I appeared to you for mercy once in behalf of the man you were sending to a shameful death?"

"In the agony of this hour for the first time I remember it."

"Then such mercy, Earle Templeton, as you granted to me, will I now show to you, and no other."

"I know—I know he was innocent. Carroll Trevelyan still lives and is here."

"He still lives!" she cried. "Oh, God! even their dead can come back to them, while mine is perished in eternal shame. And he still tells you that the woman you have loved last and best, and have wooed to be your wife, is your sister."

"If you have sought of woman's heart in your breast, have compassion. You see how I suffer." He stood before her, his proud head bowed in humility.

"Heart of woman!" she repeated. "You turned it to stone by your own brutal obduracy. Ah, I see indeed that you suffer, and it is for this I have worked."

"You have then triumphed," pleaded Templeton, humbly. "What more can you ask? You knew the woman just dead. She may have told you her story. Mr. Trevelyan had given to your brother, Ralph, but a few days before his fatal arrest, a packet of sealed papers for you that would have explained all. They must have fallen to you. Give them to me in mercy, and you will make me your slave for life or death!"

"You think the secret that might yet enable you to wed Angela Trevelyan is in my hands?"

"And what would you give to know?"

"Give!" he cried out terribly. "I would crawl on my knees to that supposed felon's grave, and pouring my heart out in the dust in a wild entreaty for pardon, would go through the broad earth, with the tramp of Ahasuerus, to proclaim him innocent of the deed for which he suffered."

And would that bring him back in his fresh, joyous youth, to my blighted, desolate heart!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "No, Earle Templeton, they have called me mad, and I may have been, but something whispered me that this hour would come, and for the crown of England I would not to-day forego its triumph. Suffer! aye, suffer! I have known it all these years, and it is but meet that your shoulders should receive the burden, when mine have been crushed under it. It was for this I suffered you."

"Woman, be still!"

"Not yet! I say it was for this I forbore to take your life on the night that fearful sentence was passed. It was for this, when he had ended his own life, I swore that every natural affection of my woman's nature, and married a man I loathed."

"And still the bitter fruit of your own ill-doing recoils upon your head," replied Templeton, with a momentary sense of triumph in spite of her. "Woman, you had taken to your bosom the asp that had stung you. It was Lewis Hartman, and not other, so help me God, who had caused Mr. Trevelyan to be abducted, and as he thought, afterwards murdered, for the sake of the great fortune which he would then inherit."

She looked up at him with a deathly terror in her face.

"Can—can that be true?" she faltered in a whisper. He might have spared her yet, but he too was relentless.

"I swear to it," he cried. "But a moment since, tidings of the arrest of your husband were brought to Mr. Trevelyan here, and he will now suffer for the deed."

"And I have been living all the while on the price of Ralph's blood!" she repeated with a shudder, seeming to think only of that, as she pressed her hands across her heart.

"I swear to it," he cried. "Who was it, then, that caused Mr. Trevelyan to be abducted, and as he thought, afterwards murdered, for the sake of the great fortune which he would then inherit?"

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other word. I will tell you. I have every reason to think Angela Trevelyan is not your sister; that she has not one drop of your blood in her veins. But if I could establish that fact beyond all shadow of doubt to the world and you, I would suffer all the tortures of the Inquisition, I would have the tongue torn from my mouth with red-hot pincers, before it should divulge one word to you, though you crawled on your knees to me every day for a life-time through these broad streets of London, to implore my forgiveness. And now, Earle Templeton, we part; never more to meet again in this world."

A moment more and Lilian Thornton had vanished as she had come. And into that room the shadows of eternal night seemed falling, where Earle Templeton lay extended across the floor, sobbing in passionate, frenzied, repentant, despairing agony.

CHAPTER L.

CONCLUSION.

Lewis Hartman sat in the police station-house defiantly smoking a cigarette.

"Gentlemen," he cried, gayly, to the surrounding officers, "it is all a farcical mistake, as you will see. Some clever impostor is trying to palm himself upon the public as the veritable, late lamented Carroll Trevelyan, but he will be easily exposed.



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